



6, Leigh Street, London WC1H 9EW

HERITAGE STATEMENT

In support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent, The statement demonstrates the architectural and historical significance of no. 6 Leigh Street and makes an assessment of the impact of changes proposed to the interior on the special interest of the listed building.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A number of heritage benefits weigh in favour of this scheme, both with respects to the listed building and the conservation area.

Further analysis presented below demonstrates there is much evidence to support the position that the scheme has been carefully worked to retain the original fabric of the building, whilst later extensions are to be removed.

The structure in the front room on the ground floor has been surveyed and found to represent a largely unified example of early fabric generally in a complete condition (See Appendix 1). The changes proposed to the space do not have any impact on the essential historic fabric and the only actual change is to the basement external wall between D and E where a new opening is formed in the existing wall into the rear dwelling.

There are great benefits to be derived from rectifying the imbalance of varying floor level and later partitions that are found on ground and basement floors. The proposal utilises the existing structural elements to construct two new flats on a broadly similar footprint. The proposed redevelopment at the front of the basement to the vault area will bring significant improvements to the public realm and benefits to the residents and walkers who regularly use the area.

The changes to the front are an appropriate design that relates to its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The design therefore adds to the existing evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal heritage values of Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The setting of the northern end of the conservation area will be improved through the new addition, improving the structure and visual quality to what is currently a neutral and isolated front area within a unified street scene. This will enhance the setting for the buildings in the conservation area and help improve the built form on both sides of the road.

The existing layout, plan and arrangements of the historic building have been considered and carefully arranged so as to provide a scale and detailing that is relevant to modern city residential accommodation. The historic cellular layout of the ground and basement is well adapted to residential use. The remodeling of the interior reveals the significance of the heritage asset as it reintroduces the sense of movement that was once such an important factor of the building. This in its own right restores the sense of identity and place.

Mindful of the 20th century interventions to the rear half of the building, a well-crafted series of rooms forming a two bed flat over two floors is a positive way of restoring a currently tired and dislocated space. By being designed in sensitive materials that relate to the old building this will actually improve the setting of the listed building.

The proposal enhances the current visual amenity and aesthetics of the setting. The approach to the works is to retain as much of the historic fabric of the building as possible and as such, the character of the listed building would not be harmed. A

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positive contribution is made to sustainable craftsmanship through the recycling of materials such as York Stone, floor slabs and timber panels.

In respects to the Core Strategy the scheme relates well to the distinctive local character of the area and its adjacent buildings and is designed to create a safe, inclusive and attractive environment that will enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage. The analysis has shown that the new development is appropriate and compatible in terms of size, scale, massing and design (CS14) and relates to strategic and local views. The proposal to reinstate a historic void in the ground provides an innovative design that will greatly enhance the built environment (DP24).

As a result it will be in keeping and positive to the character and appearance of the area and the Conservation area, and its setting. The assessment shows that the design is in harmony with the characteristic form of the area and surrounding buildings, in terms of height, layout and building style.

In respects of National Policy, the degree of the harm caused to the historic environment is balanced against the wider design, public realm and community benefits. The statement concludes that the proposed remodelling would be an appropriate solution to a this Listed building, particularly as a result of its design, which is based on a respect for traditional architecture, and its use of materials, which sit well within the locality.

The proposed remodelling seeks to meet the key objectives of Bloomsbury Conservation area Appraisal, in ensuring the design approach causes no harm to the character of the listed building at 6 Leigh Street and does not impinge on the setting of the surrounding buildings. It is important to note that the scheme protects the open spaces and views which are so critical to the character and setting of area.

In respects to the Local Plan it is demonstrated that the proposal and associated building works have been designed to respect the character and setting of buildings within the Conservation area. This statement herewith supplies sufficient detailed information of the proposed remodelling to allow proper consideration of the effects on the Conservation area.

The proposals do therefore adequately ensure the enhancement and reinstatement of architectural quality and unity on Leigh Street. This is important as the building at 6 Leigh Street is listed as part of the group which makes up a southern element of this street.

ADDENDUM

Following the recent site meeting with Camden, a site visit was convened by the client team to provide a response to the comments and suggestions offered by the Council. The applicant has now sought to add further clarity to the questions raised at the pre-application stage and has made some adjustments and additions to the Heritage Statement (19 March 2013), outlined below

On the advice of Camden further work was carried out into the age and type of certain dividing walls in the building. Sample observations and selective investigations of wall material was undertaken to qualify the historic value of the building, identify patterns in fabric and whether later interventions had taken place. This will fundamentally help Camden understand the relationship between different parts of the building and the sequence of development on the lower levels.

Opening up works to walls provided a guideline on the buildings earliest form and shows that the walls being retained are of essential heritage interest. From this, the architect has crafted new intervention that proposes to remove and remodel certain features whilst retaining the historic fabric.

The following elements were requested and where appropriate have been inserted into the Heritage statement.

References to Heritage Statement

In 2.1 (p. 10): Early cartographic evidence shows the rear extensions to be later additions, of which the exact date is not known, but is certain to be between 1816 and 1874.

In 2.1 (p.11); Anecdotal evidence about the development of the area behind Leigh Street is gleaned from a brief summary of the development of Compton Place

In 3.1 (p.15); reference to the high status of the front room on first floor

In 3.1 (p. 16); The ground floor plan has been replaced with existing floor plan:

In 3.3 (pp. 20-22); further analysis is given of the historic sequence presented by structural elements of the building. This includes an **illustrated plan of the building (p.21)**, supporting text, as well as the results of the investigation into the fabric requested by LB Camden (in Appendix 1).

In 3.4 (p. 23); Second paragraph has been revised:

In 3.4 (p. 23); Two more items have been added to the list in paragraph 6. of architectural and historic features that will be retained:

In 3.5 (p.25); Concerns over the impact on the significance of the front room are addressed in 2nd paragraph.

In 4.1 (p. 29); Findings of the results of the impact on the Historic fabric are reported.

In Appendix 1 (40-46); Analysis is provided of the building fabric in the front room, where four sections of the wall have been individually assessed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to support applications for planning permission and listed building consent to be submitted to the London Borough of Camden on behalf of Mr Pirie/Kensington Colleges. The report demonstrates the architectural and historical significance of no. 6 Leigh Street and makes an assessment of the impact of changes proposed to the interior on the special interest of the listed building.

Reconciling development within the distinct setting of Bloomsbury and Leigh Street is an exercise that demands a level of understanding, observation and sensitivity. The starting point of such an analysis is in defining the qualities of the building and their relative significance. It is then possible to assess the degree to which the proposals will cause an impact on the historic and architectural character of the building.

As a listed building within a conservation area, the assessment considers the historic context of Bloomsbury and the prevailing characteristics of the setting and context within which the building sits (Section 2.0). The architectural and historic survey (3.1) gives an assessment of the internal parts of the building. It goes on to confirm that there have been many alterations and extensions (on all floors) with the addition of rooms and changes in levels to form living accommodation, alongside the insertion of partition walls and later decoration forming a common theme.

An assessment of the heritage asset is important in allowing the impact of the proposals on the conservation of the building to be fully understood. This Heritage assessment found at the end of this report (Section 4.0) shows that where there is internal historic fabric found remaining in situ, it is being conserved. This follows the overriding principle of the scheme which has been to promote a 'conservation-led' approach to change at no.6 Leigh Street so as to provide interior space that responds to the historic fabric whilst being more in keeping with the needs of a private residential building. This will help breathe new life into parts of the structure that have become tired and mean the house can be optimized into full residential use once again. It is highly desirable to expect all changes to be unified within the setting of Leigh Street and Camden.

1.1 The Proposal

The property is a grade II listed building to the south of Leigh Street, forming part of a row of active shops. The description of the building is given in 3.1 and whilst information is scarce it is likely to have been occupied by a trader or merchant and his family when it was first conceived in the early 19th century. It is typical of the other adjacent shops in the terrace as it is over 4 story's (plus cellar) with yellow stock brick and extensive refacing.

The ground floor and basement are in partial states of occupation and the rear outbuilding at basement level is only a single building of historic appearance. A link room joins the main front room to the rear in what was previously an outdoor area. The proposal is to retain the shop unit whilst converting the rear storage on Ground and Basement level and the remaining Basement space into one flat respectively.

2.0 LEIGH STREET AND ITS HISTORIC CONTEXT

2.1 History of Bloomsbury

Seventeenth century

Bloomsbury represents a period of London's early expansion northwards, dating from Stuart times (1660) and continuing through the Georgian and Regency periods to around 1840. The period of expansion, which followed the Plague in 1665 and the Great Fire of London in 1666, replaced a series of Medieval Manors on the periphery of London and their associated agricultural and pastoral land.

Early development including houses to the north of the area saw grander residential districts established for wealthy families, such as Earl of Chesterfield, Sir Hans Sloane and Lord Mansfield. By intermarriage with the Russell family at the end of the 1660s, the entire landed holding eventually passed into the hands of the Bedford Estate.

The first phase of construction in Bloomsbury began in 1661 with Bloomsbury Square, which laid the foundations for the form of modern Bloomsbury and was the first London plot to be called a square – a fashionable place of residence in the capital at the time.

Development carried out speculatively by a number of builders on leases from the major landowners, led to a consistent form with terraced townhouses constructed on a formal grid pattern of streets and landscaped squares.

Eighteenth century

This century is distinguished by development of Bloomsbury for the Bedford Estate, coupled with the establishment of hospitals (Foundling, 1739), a market and various commercial and cultural uses (such as the British Museum, 1753).

The development of Bedford Square 1775-1783 by Humphrey Repton and James Burton remains one of the most attractive and complete 18th-century squares in London and is an example of the formal and uniform types of development taking place in the vicinity of Leigh Street.

The first (1799) edition of Richard Horwood's detailed survey of London shows the intensive development of terraced housing. Furthermore the open fields between Gower Street and Coram's Foundling Hospital and burial ground to the north east of Russell Square are shown being laid out for building. The major development of the squares started in about 1800 when the Duke of Bedford developed the land to the north with Russell Square as its centrepiece.

Nineteenth century

The Victorian era saw the urban area evolve with a movement of the wealthy to newly developing urban and suburban areas to the north. By 1813 (Horwood's map), the area set out in the 1790s had been fully built up with terraces, squares and mews and the land to its north had been laid out in readiness for further new housing. London's green field surroundings were disappearing under suburban sprawl.

From 1800, new housing, principally for the middle classes, spread northwards from the increasingly industrial quarters of Clerkenwell and Shoreditch, and expanded around the core of late 18th century developments at Bloomsbury, Somers Town and Camden

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Town. The Bloomsbury Estate plan shows the intended development of the estate to the north with the two garden squares (Russell and Bloomsbury) as the principal new features.

Despite Bloomsbury's size and varying ownerships, its expansion northwards from roughly 1660 to 1840 has led to a notable consistency in the street pattern, spatial character and predominant building forms, as characterised by the Parish map of 1834.



SECTION OF
JOHN BRITTON'S
PARISH MAP
(1834)¹

However, in the second half of the century, there was a decline in the desirability of Bloomsbury as a residential area with the construction of fashionable villa developments to the north and west, such as Belsize Park and St John's Wood, leading to an increase in non-residential uses taking over formerly residential dwellings for office space. With the decline in demand for residential properties, and the advent of the railways (Kings Cross, 1852), hotel and office redevelopments began to appear. Many stores in surrounding streets connected with servicing the new national terminus were established. There was also further development of a number of major institutions including University College (1826), the British Museum and various specialist hospitals and educational uses around Queen Square.

Twentieth Century

Major developments during the first half of the 20th century were largely associated with expansion of the University of London in the area between Gower Street and Russell Square, the continuing development of hospitals in the east of the Conservation Area and of offices, hotels and shops along the main arterial routes.

During the 1930s a new scale and aesthetic was adopted by the University with a

¹ Survey of London: volume 24: The parish of St Pancras part 4: King's Cross Neighbourhood, page 4

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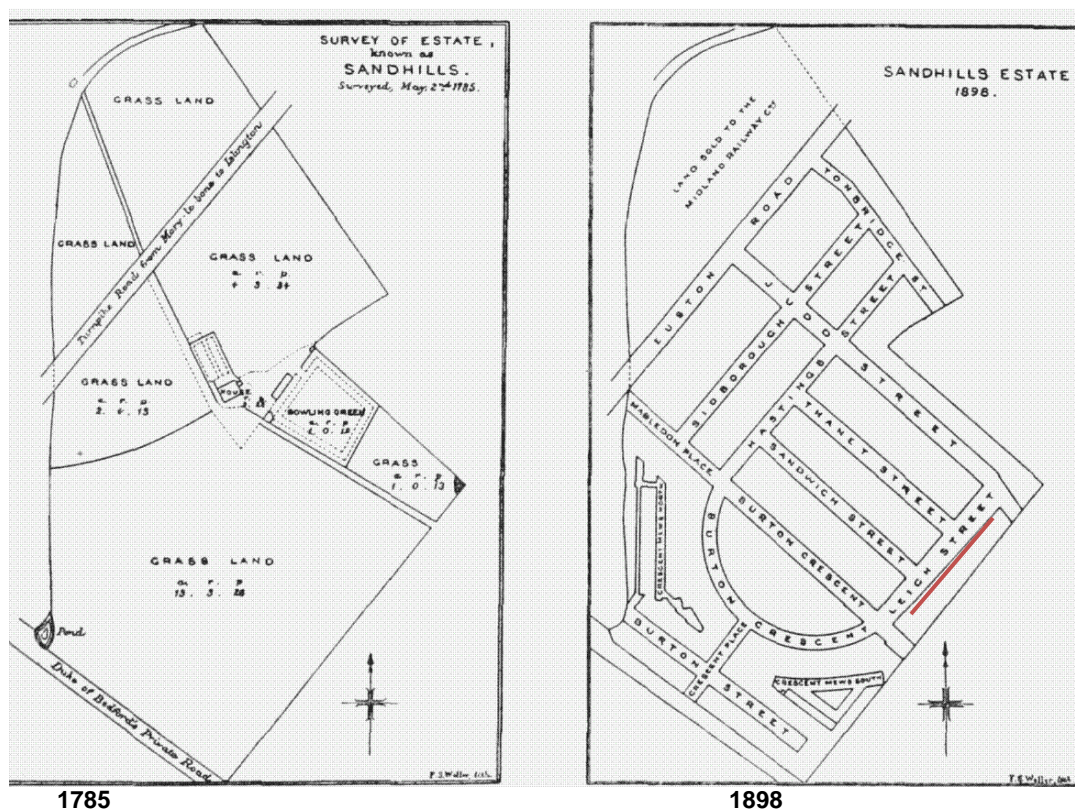
scheme for its expansion planned by Charles Holden, but not finished until after the war. University developments continued to replace the older fabric of Bloomsbury in addition to reconstruction following wartime bomb damage. Among the areas worst affected were the western end of Theobald's Road, High Holborn, Brunswick Square, Red Lion Square and the area south of King's Cross.

2.2 The Skinners Estate

The 17th century had seen the foundation of many estates in the *Bloomsbury area*, of which one, the *Skinners' (Tonbridge) Estate*, is of particular relevance to Leigh Street. This estate was also known as Sandhills, was acquired by Sir Andrew Judd in the seventeenth century, who vested it in the Skinners' Company as Trustees for the benefit of the Tonbridge School in Kent²

It comprised an area extending slightly north of what became Euston Road (around the modern St Pancras station), and south into Bloomsbury, extending slightly south and west of Burton Street, south of Leigh Street, and slightly west of Judd Street up to just south of Hastings Street, where it extended further east to just east of Tonbridge Street

Maps of the estate³ from 1785 and Horwood (1792-9), before it was developed show it as fields. Estate maps from 1898 after its development show the streets as they are today and as seen in the Greenwood map (1830) although with different names.



² Survey of London, vol. 24, 1952.

³ S. Rivington, History of Tonbridge School (2nd edn, 1898) and are reproduced in the Survey of London, vol. 24 (1952).

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Whilst building began North of the Euston Road before 1800, the southern part of Euston Road remained mainly farmland until 1807. Development of the land was prompted partly by development on the neighbouring Foundling Estate to the south, some of which encroached on the Skinners' land. So in 1807 the Skinners' estate followed the Foundling Estate's example and granted building leases to James Burton⁴.

By the time of the twentieth century the estate sold the freeholds of much of its Bloomsbury property, although it retained some pubs such as the Skinners Arms⁵. The Burton Street and Bidborough Street residential properties were let on long leases to Camden Borough Council, while "Cartwright Gardens...is the only street where the freeholds have stayed virtually intact. Several of them are let to London University on long leases and are used as university halls of residence; but most are let to private hotels on shorter and far more profitable leases".

Leigh Street

Leigh Street is in the north-east of Bloomsbury, running between the junction of Mabledon Place and Burton Crescent with Judd Street. It was developed in 1810–1813 by James Burton and others⁶ and was named after the town of Leigh, near Tonbridge in Kent.

No. 8 was home to landscape painter William Witherington⁷ from 1834 to 1847. Social researcher, satirist⁸ and advocate of reform, Henry Mayhew, lived here in 1850.

Leigh Street runs west and east and connects the south end of Cartwright Gardens with Judd Street. In March, 1809, the Skinners' Company granted a lease to the builder, James Payne of Marchmont Street, for the sites of no.4 to no.9 on the south side of the street east of Marchmont Street. At the same time they let the ground for three adjacent houses to James Parry of Everett Street and a further four sites further east, on the south side, to James Burton and Thomas Jennings of Marchmont Street. The rate books show that the street was not actually built until three years later (1810) when the first five houses were fit for occupation. Another six were added in 1811, and the remaining twenty-two were completed in 1813.

The old houses that remain are all on the south side of the street and form a group which is numbered consecutively from no.2 to no.20, west to east. They have much in common with the designs of the neighboring Sandwich Street (Fig 1) and no's 3 to 8 and no's 12 to 20 have shops, with the example from no.14 (Fig 2) being typical of its period⁹.

⁴ See S. Rivington, 'Burton and the Sandhills Estate,' *The Builder*, 30 May 1908.

⁵ Shirley Green, *Who Owns London?*, 1986

⁶ Survey of London, vol. 24, 1952

⁷ "Witherington, William Frederick". Dictionary of National Biography 62. London: Smith, Elder & Co. p. 270.

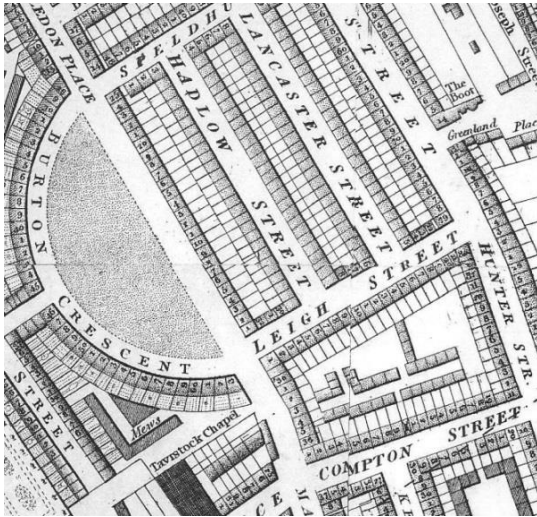
⁸ Famous as co-founder of the humorous magazine *Punch* in 1841

⁹ 'The Skinners' Company Estate', Survey of London: volume 24: The parish of St Pancras part 4: King's Cross Neighbourhood (1952), pp. 83-93

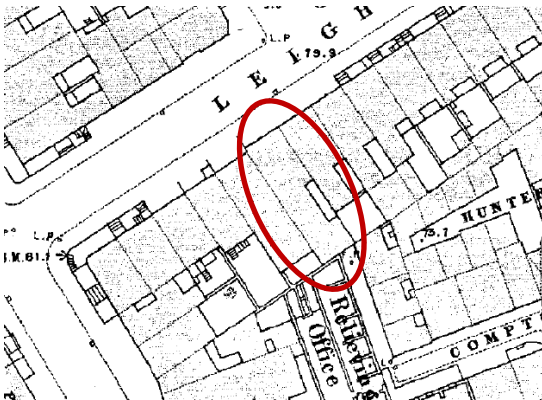
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Horwood (1816) shows the group of buildings forming the southern row of Leigh Street to have unified rear areas with well-defined spaces to rear plot boundary. By 1874 a degree of infilling is common for a number of the buildings in the street. It is important to read these developments alongside the changes being made to the rear of Leigh Street in Compton Place and its role firstly, as a mews, then its lapse into being a slum area (See Note 1).

In 1874, the map shows the entire length of the plot as developed and observation of the brick work and tiles from first floor show that the line of the extension is at variance with the building to which it is now attached.



1816



1874

Early town plans show that the group of buildings of which no.6 is a part, has retained a narrow plot line through its history and, along with no's 7 and 8, has built form extending to the rear boundary line.



Figure 1: 6 & 7 Sandwich Street



Figure 2: 14 Leigh Street

It is noted that the early plans show the presence of an outer yard area to the east side of no's 6, 7 and 8. The building to the rear of the Leigh Street block, forming the inner lanes of Compton Street, formed a religious centre (1874, 1895) before becoming a print works by 1911. A slip road has always existed to the rear of no.6 Leigh Street going past the print works and feeding into Compton Place.

Compton Place

Anecdotal evidence about the origins of this rear space is gleaned from more analysis of the development of Compton Place and St Pancras Medical Mission (Also known as Medical Missionary Association) also based on Compton Place. The building, known as the Relieving Office, was a dispensary founded in 1888 and run by the Medical Missionary Association, an organisation which established a network of medical missions in poor areas of London and across the world.

In 1908 the Medical Mission in Compton Place was closed, "the population having been so largely altered by the substitution of new flats for the old tenement houses" (The Times, 14 April 1908). The Place was developed as a mews by the Foundling hospital in early 19th century; George Payne built coach houses and stables here in the early part of the century (Donald Olsen, Town Planning in London, 1984). However, it quickly developed an unsavoury reputation and instead of being used for stabling, the Foundling Hospital's designated mews were increasingly occupied by poor families.

Compton Place was one of the two main slum areas which developed on the Foundling estate; it was continually altered, pulled down, and re-erected, only for the same problems to recur. It was the only street on the Foundling Estate to be described by a report in 1844 as being below the level of "respectable tradesmen and lodgers".

The vestry of St Pancras condemned property in Compton Place in 1884, buying up the leasehold interests and surrendering them to the Foundling Hospital; however, nothing was built on the cleared sites in Compton Place until the late 1890s, and there were still 18 houses whose leases did not expire until 1907 (Donald Olsen, 1984)

2.3 Listed Building Designation

No's 4-8 Leigh Street was listed on 14 May 1974 and the description mentions the following distinctive features, principally of the façade:

5 terraced houses with later shops. c1810-13. Built by J Payne. Yellow stock brick with extensive refacing. 4 storeys and cellars. 2 windows each. No.5, wooden shop front with pilasters carrying projecting entablature with rounded ends and projecting cornice; altered shop window and doorway; square-headed house doorway with overlight having margin lights and panelled door. No's 4, 6, 7 & 8 with altered later C19 and C20 shop fronts. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected¹⁰.

The listings for the adjacent buildings at no's.1, 2 and 3, 9 -11 and 12-19 (by James Burton) all form a consecutive group running from nos. 1-19. With the exception of no's. 4-8, the buildings are noted for their attached railings which are a distinct part of the street scene.

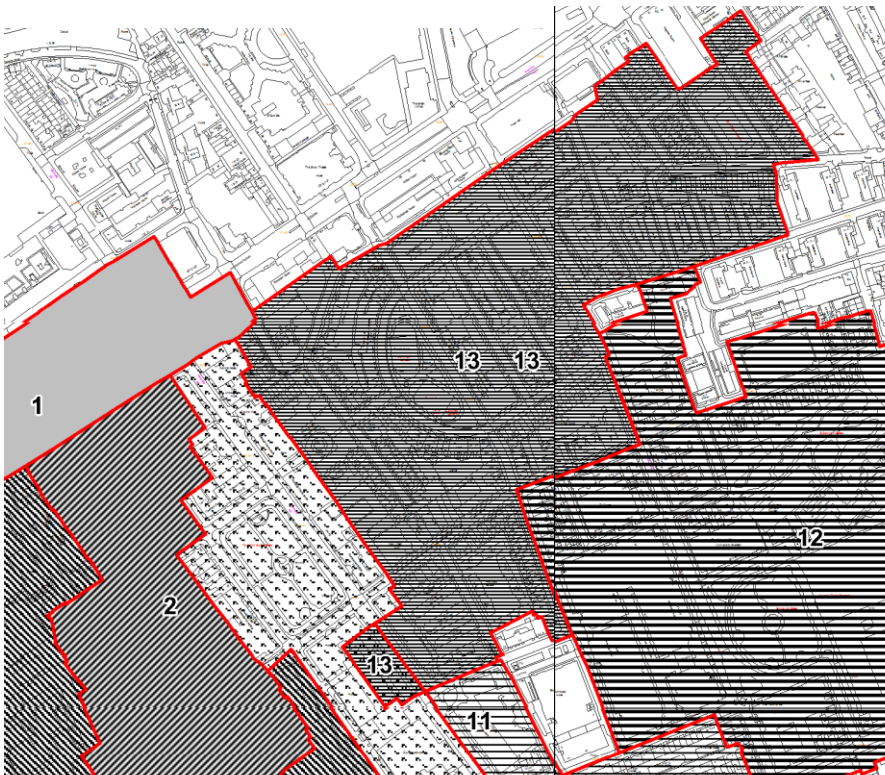
2.4 Conservation area context

Like surrounding sub areas the interest of Leigh Street derives from the formal early 19th century street pattern and layout of open spaces, and the relatively intact surviving terraces of houses.

Leigh Street is in the northern part of the Bloomsbury Conservation area and is in sub area number 13; Cartwright Gardens/Argyle Square (**Plan 1**). As well as bordering on three other important sub areas (Coram's Fields, Queen's Gardens and Bloomsbury Square), sub area 13 recognises the strong relationship of Leigh Street with Cartwright Gardens, Judd Street and surrounding streets. It is significant in that there is a long line of listed buildings flowing from the south of Leigh Street to connect with the arc of designated buildings in Cartwright Gardens (**See Plan 2**, Townscape Appraisal)

¹⁰ Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: -1952: 88.

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Plan 1: Conservation Area Plan

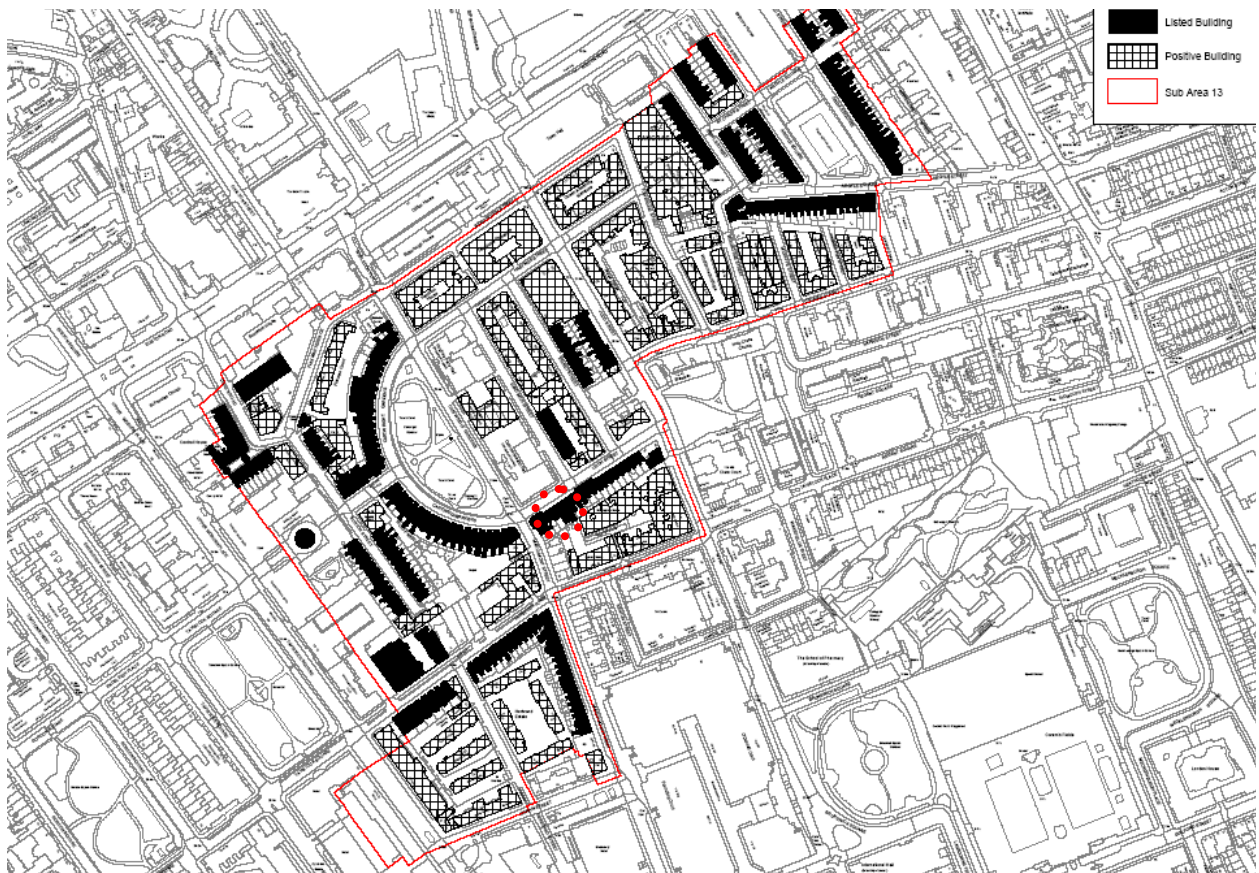
Remnants of the early 19th century terraced streets, mainly designed and built by James Burton, remain to the south and east of Cartwright Gardens. There are a notable number of listed buildings in these streets, with more widespread late 19th and 20th century development along the busier thoroughfare of Tavistock Place and in Marchmont Street. Whilst the majority of properties are four stories there is also a terrace of more modest two-storey properties on Thanet Street developed by Burton in the 1820s. There are notable views from Judd Street of the rear elevations of the Thanet Street terrace, in which butterfly roof forms are particularly evident.

The properties on Judd Street and Leigh Street are of four storeys and a number have had shop fronts inserted in the 19th century, several of which retain traditional architectural details. Marchmont Street, a predominantly residential neighbourhood in the early 1790s, had by 1840 developed into a typical early Victorian 'High Street'.

Most buildings in the area are characterised by stuccoed ground floors with upper floors built from London stock brick. Nearly all the houses have traditional style sash windows, with rubbed brick window heads. In Marchmont Street window surrounds and heads are more elaborate, since they are characterised by a mix of stone and stucco pediments.

Other recurring features in this area are cast-iron front boundary railings, and wrought iron window balconies at upper level. The Conservation Area appraisal notes no. 6, as well as no's 3, 5, 16, 17 Leigh Street and the Norfolk Arms Public House as being shopfronts of merit and it goes on to give the view along Leigh Street to Cartwright Gardens as a key local scene.

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Plan 2: Townscape appraisal

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY

3.1 Form & Significance of 6 Leigh Street

General

Survey shows there have been a number of small extensions and additions made to the building over time, often reflecting the changing needs of the shopkeeper, merchant and family's who were resident. Throughout its history the upper floors have been family residences, with finely articulated balusters on the stairwell and well carved architraves on door surrounds providing signs to their status.

On the first floor the main room at the front of the building is of high status and would, in historic times, have acted as the main entertaining area for the resident family. The Grounds and basement floors have to this day formed the retail and shop area of the building.

Although no original plans have been traced it is clear from the surviving primary fabric of the building that the principal space on the ground floor was the well-proportioned shop front and space (north facing). Characteristic features of its early retail function are shown through the large flat shelves on both sides of the store area, the display window and the main side corridor linking to the rear.

In common with a building of this age, the basement was likely used for services, kitchen/ scullery area and servant accommodation. There are two blocked off store rooms at the front, running under the road and linking with the basement front area, now blocked off from the pavement above.

Windows are a mix of sash and casement types, made of standardized panes of glass divided by thin, delicate wooden glazing bars. The pattern of windowing follows the Georgian typology as the first floor windows are tall and elegantly expansive, second floor windows shorter. However due to the retail function of the ground floor the window here is as wide as it is short, as would be expected of a commercial property.



Design at top of 1st floor stair

The layout was based on the usual formula adopted for Georgian shop buildings, of one large open room wide and two rooms deep. Alterations to the interior are to be expected and in this case, the ground floor has at some point been stripped of a dividing internal

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wall, so as to enlarge the designated shop floor space. The front shop space is connected by a later extension that connects with the rear outbuilding which, in Georgian times, was built for storage, its current purpose.

Ground floor Plan

GRIDLINE A - SET OUT FROM CORNER TO RIGHT OF DOORWAY (AS LOOKED AT FROM FRONT LIGHTWELL) OF FRONT LIGHTWELL AT BASEMENT LEVEL.
GRIDLINE B - SET OUT ON CENTRE LINE OF SPINE WALL AT BASEMENT LEVEL.
GRIDLINE C - LINE OF EXTERNAL FACE OF REAR WALL OF MAIN HOUSE AT BASEMENT LEVEL.
GRIDLINE D - LINE OF EXTERNAL CORNER OF EXISTING REAR OUTBUILDING AT BASEMENT LEVEL.
GRIDLINE E - LINE OF INNER FACE OF REAR WALL TO LIGHTWELL AT BASEMENT LEVEL.

2.12 Internal ceiling height



syte

6 Leigh Street
London
WC1H 9EW

Ground Plan
As Existing

| Rev | By | Date | Check | Appr |
|-----|----|----------|-------|------|
| 1 | AW | 2025.101 | | |

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The building floor plan is 3 rooms deep (A-C), with the front and back rooms enclosing a later additional room (B) in the centre. This middle area of the building which in early times was left as an open area connecting the retail to the stores, has been developed in later times and now comprises an office with a store room to its side.

Walls between no. 6 and no's 7 and 5 were built thick to help carry the weight of the chimney stacks. On the ground and basement floors of no. 6, primary walls are the dividing walls to adjoining property's and have not been taken out; whilst chimney breasts retain their original positions on the party wall, heating rooms from the sides rather than the corner.

Evidence of abandoned stairs and blocked openings suggests a fundamental change in the ordering of spaces in the lower levels of the building. The siting of a (now truncated) staircase towards the rear of the site along a party wall, beyond an entrance passage, would have allowed the stairs to be directly lit and is a sign of the affluent nature of previous residents. Indeed, the continuation of the stair case to upper floors is a veritable sign of fashionable interest in Georgian times.

There have been some modifications to the building and its interior and it is more than likely that previous shop keepers utilised existing spaces to create back office rooms on the Ground floor and utilised the rooms in the basement for staff and administration.

During the later 20th century when the upper rooms were converted to flats, the building was remodelled, with the addition of suspended ceilings in parts of the basement and ground floor. The precise date of these works is not known and it appears that this work was done without the removal of any walls. The changes to ground floor as witnessed through the insertion of a new room (space B) and loss of dividing wall (space A) may have happened at this time or earlier.

Although no record of this work has been found but its character suggests early-mid 20th century. It has left a legible floor plan whose architectural interest is gained through a mix of historic features alongside refitting and remodeling that has occurred to the internal spaces, including the addition of decorative features to the walls and floors

The rear area clearly had links to the road and access ways that formed southwards to Tavistock Place. Presumably the lightwell (Ground) and Yard (Basement) were utilised by tradesman in the moving of bulkier items for the store.



Lightwell/
Truncated stair



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3.2 Exterior:

The building principally derives its significance from the façade and the ground, first and second floors. The altered shop front is of interest and its link with the range of buildings in the group (at nos 4, 7 and 8) important. The spacing of the first floor windows is also a distinctive part of the building as is the detailing of the gauged brick flat arches to the recessed sash.

It illustrates how a building on a confined site both harmonizes with its surroundings and has modest gravitas. The frontage is enlivened by the commercial frontage at ground floor which is enlivened by the parapet and the appearance of a flat roof which accorded with Georgian aspirations for classical proportions.

The basic structural envelope is still as it was when first built. The separation of the retail from the residential units upstairs is very evident in the double doors at the front, where the numbered door is the access for the upper rooms, as was always the case. Access to the shop for customers would have been through the shuttered opening, which is currently blocked off.

On the façade, elements of the traditional shop front such as pilasters, stall riser and fascia remain. The front elevation is however at odds at ground level with the rest of the row, as the front basement space has been filled in and does not have any railings. In a way this disturbs the visual completeness of the main building and makes it different to the other buildings that make the setting of this stretch of Leigh Street.



The group of 5-9 Leigh Street



View of middle and rear section



Double doors at frontage

3.3 Interior (to be read in conjunction with photographs 1-15 in Appendix 1)

The structural layout of the early building has generally been retained on the ground and basement floors. Yet clearly a number of changes have been made subdividing walls and to the central circulation core that once revolved around an old staircase (now truncated) towards the rear on the ground floor and the loss of the corridor link to the side.

The rooms are generally plain and only distinguished by basic skirting, with one or two design anomaly's and some sash windows. Ceiling heights have been reconfigured in each room with ad hoc timber beams added later to give vertical support. In addition, changes in levels also create a strong sense of dislocation and an experience of isolated rooms strung alongside one another.

Another feature on all floors is the chimney breasts which at some point have been

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covered with plaster and paper or filled with brick. Although not visible these are complete load bearing structures and form part of a coherent design scheme, which gives them considerable significance not readily apparent in their current state. To help understand a building which has seen a sequence of later additions and reconfigurations, a basic schema is provided (See plan below).

- i. 1813 – Early building, as demonstrated by structural load bearing elements.
- ii. Standalone storage building to rear of basement (Gridlines D – E) added sometime after the initial building, as not apparent on 1816 map. The standard and technique of brickwork is distinct to the external wall of Gridline D. As the former are built of stack bonds where the bricks do no overlap and are inherently weak. The structural elements are seen to the outside of Gridline C where an early lead pipe runs in the corner.
- iii. The toilet extension and chimney added to basement (C – D)
- iv. Changes in floor level and ceiling height on ground (C - D) suggest this space was previously open and was developed at the same time as toilet and chimney in basement below.
- v. Corridor once formed side access for people living upstairs who could reach the rear staircase from this point. Blocked opening is evidence.
- vi. The external stair on ground (D - E) is evidence of growing use of links between store units and main building. Wooden panelled walls on Gridline D are also later additions indicating greater practical uses for this space and possibly a temporary measure.
- vii. These changes manifest themselves as the occupants/ owners sought to extend the retail area towards the rear storage area.

Historic Fabric

The structure in the front room on the ground floor has been surveyed and found to represent a largely unified example of early fabric generally in a complete condition (See Appendix 1). The changes proposed to the space do not have any impact on the essential historic fabric and the only actual change is to the basement external wall between D and E where a new opening is formed in the existing wall into the rear dwelling.

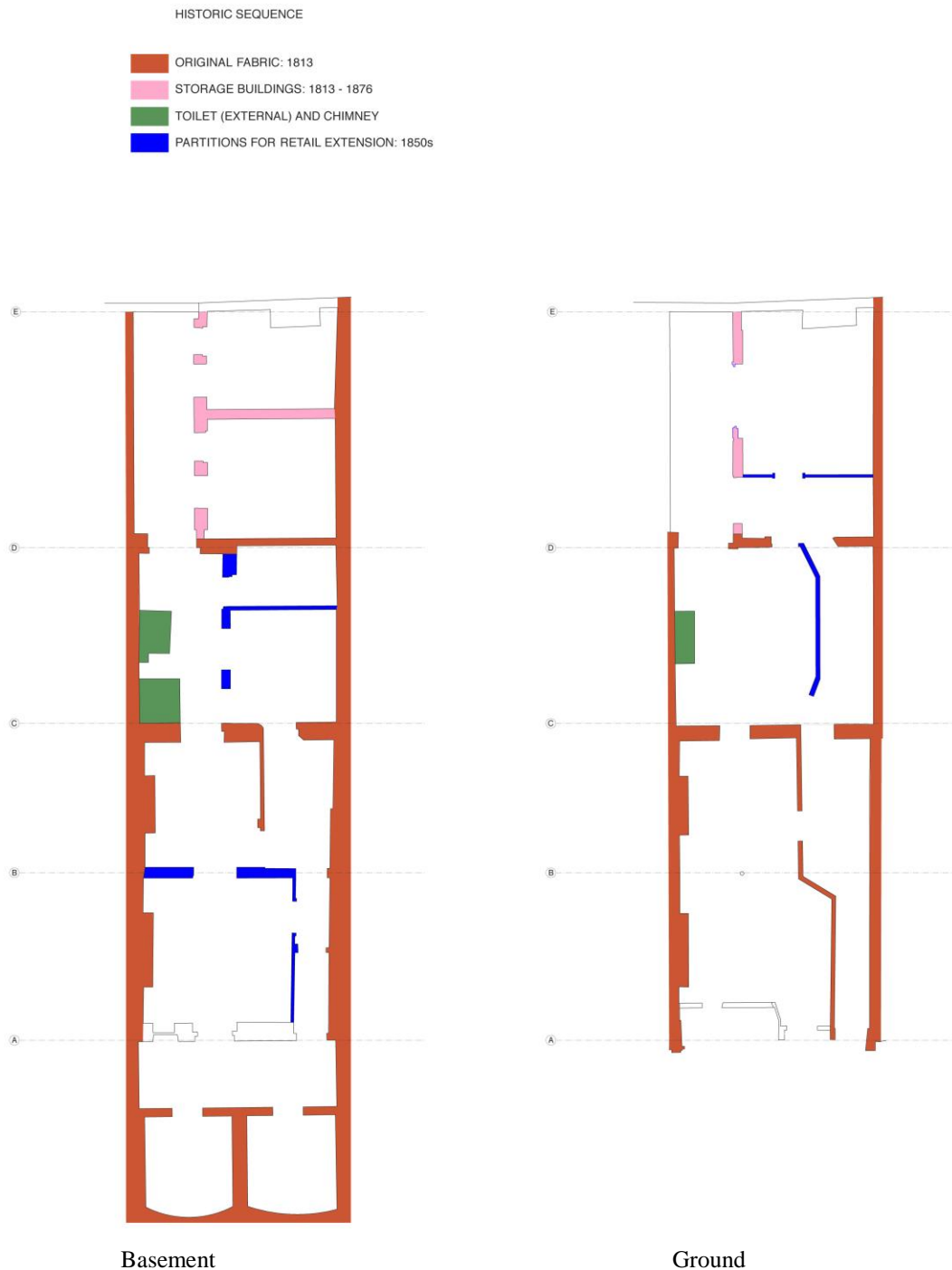
The solid wall at Grid line D is original and there is ample evidence to suggest that the space between it and Grid line C was left void for a number of years and used only as transition between building and later store units. Therefore the early extra wall was not a part of the later wing nor is it contemporary to the rear storage buildings which, as shown already, come some years later.

The internal wall in the room space (C-D) is formed of layers of plaster and has seen numerous modifications. Whilst the space between Gridline C and D is of little interest on the ground floor, it does take on some significance in the basement, where it tells the storey of the probable status of this space. For once the decision had been made to fill in this area (in the mid-19th century), the basement was probably accommodation quarters for servants and or shop workers, hence the lower class status of the rooms such as

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lower ceilings etc. The wooden rafters on the basement ceiling, the stone sections on the centre, the concrete shelves and stone fireplace are all evidence of later adaptation.

Whilst the chimney structures in the front rooms (A-B and B-C) are significant in understanding the building the chimneys in the room between C and D is a later addition, added when the middle part of the building was developed to provide more retail space and greater continuity to the rear.



Basement

The basement area largely contains brick and mortar materials, as well as evidence of breeze block and later additions. Secondary timber joists are seen in the central area to the back of the bedroom, and there is concrete flooring with intact flagstones at the bottom of the stairs (1). In the front room, later steel joists are supporting the concrete ceiling over; and in the middle room (B) an inserted timber post is found performing this function.

The doors appear to be old and the surrounding architraves plain (2). The wooden wall panels in the front room appear to be Victorian, as suggested by the interpretation of inset square sections (3). Signs of early construction methods are visible above the wall panels, where wooden ceiling supports are shown with remnants of plaster still being retained in the jaws of the support (4).

Signs of the functional side of the basement are evident in several places. An old brick oven (5) is found in the rear building and a concrete sink sits in the corner of the front room (6). The concrete floored area of the vault contains a number of apparatus, such as three old water tanks, that strongly connect to its operation as the engine room of the shop.

Ground

Although the front floor plan is altered, the ground floor is, with one or two exceptions, of an ordinary appearance. The space is generally more open now than it would have been as the partition wall dividing the rear and front of the main house has been dismantled creating one big space. The major changes really concern the patterns of circulation, the changes in floor levels and some piecemeal interventions.

Interventions include modifications with plaster and board over the stone and brick walls which formed part of the original fabric. This is well illustrated in the rear ground floor room (7), the corridor (8) and on the external face of the rear wall of the main house (9), where synthetic materials are seen next to the early stone and brickwork. Storage rooms too have seen later insertions in the form of wooden posts and concrete shelves (10). One distinct feature that possibly relates to the Victorian shop and their later adaptation is the large shelves found to the sides (Photo 11) of the front space, reflecting a feature of some age that may have been connected to part of the original shop fittings and fixtures.

The evidence of an old staircase towards the back in a rear room gives expression to a logical vertical extension starting and ending at this point. This gives a clear idea of previous movement patterns towards the back of the building.

However, the once distinct corridor space is no longer apparent to the right of the shop floor and later interventions have obscured the previous access from the front to the rear storage areas that is in common with the former layout and movement patterns.

Additionally, the chimney breast to the wall is an architectural feature which has been covered up by later plaster and painting. Yet, as a surviving primary feature it is a record of the original and highly functional nature of the space and therefore of some significance.

The change of levels signifies the end of the original building. The dual nature of the shop frontage and access to the store for patrons and customers was realized through the door which is now closed off (12). Although apparently old when revealed from the ground floor (13), the floorboards are seen, from below, to be later additions (14). The front room has a range of later additions ranging from board, wood and metal (15).

3.4 Summary of Significance

The building has some architectural merit in its own right and its external visual quality is given by the unchanged appearance of the early frontage, its layout and plan.

In terms of the contribution made by the building to the conservation area, the building is of historic interest in providing context and a part of the setting. The retained historic interior (mainly on the upper floors) is an example of architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship for a building intended as a single house with a shop. It is important to note that the significant front room on the first floor will not be touched by the proposals.

Ground and basement floors are of comparable significance since the spaces have undergone various degrees of alterations, with basement clearly subject to much change in order to give both lower status accommodation as well as storage area. Indeed, it is noted that both previous and proposed remodelling has retained the dividing walls and chimney breasts as important parts of the early building, along with other features such as fireplaces, select windows and doors.

One of the most interesting architectural elements of the interior is surviving remains of the staircase. As it is a part of the original structural scheme and contributes to an understanding of the building, and thus is of considerable significance. This is coupled with the wall paneling in the main area which also gives an interesting example of decorative intent.

The listing mainly reflects the use of the lower floors as a shop and the largely unaltered façade. It does not refer to the rear areas where the majority of the changes have previously occurred.

The changes which have happened to the lower stories over time such as the loss of the rear staircase, changes to the room plan on ground floor and basement and the disconnection of the corridor spaces, mean its significance has to a degree already been eroded.

It is important to note the following features of architectural and historic importance that the design is seeking to retain:

- Outline Georgian layout;
- Shop front and overall intactness of the upper floors;
- Reference to an early staircase at rear;
- Lather and plaster; Studwork
- Dado panelling
- Idiosyncratic detail such as sink and fireplace;
- Examples of decorative detail such as coving and paneling that could be exposed during works to take down suspended ceilings and unblock staircase;

- Suggestions of the previous circulation and movement through the building indicated through currently disconnected parts of corridors;
- The previous corridor link, important to the integrity of the historic function of the shop and its link to the rear yard and access through the back to Tavistock Square;
- Enhancement of frontage including the front vault opening, with additional storage and ancillary infrastructure; Restore the shuttered opening to the shop.

3.5 Proposed Remodeling in relation to architectural and historic character

Design Approach (To be read in conjunction with the Plans and Drawings)

The basis for the design approach is to seek to restore a number of key spaces for which the early building is noted for. This predominantly relates to the previous corridor link which was important to the integrity of the historic function of the shop and its link to the rear yard and access through the back to Tavistock Square. The reinstatement of a rear stairway is another important reference to the role of internal structures to the operation of a house in Georgian times. Externally, the proposal to reinstate the front vault opening, with a railing stair down to the flat, follows closely the type of detail common in the frontages of Leigh Street.

The proposals for the area at ground and basement level will see the space put to more effective use. Specifically there would be a basement flat and a rear dwelling flat occupying both floors. Whilst the ground floor covers a similar footprint as the basement, the only difference is that the basement consists of the additional front vault area and a small courtyard area to the side towards the rear.

The proposed design and layout has been prepared having taken into account the defining character of the listed building and the constraints and opportunities imposed by its retained structure and unique features. It is intended that the existing spaces within the building will be remodeled to create new living accommodation with the facilities associated with city living. Later interventions can be removed without harming architectural or historic importance of this building and the spaces are to be realigned in such a way so as to enhance the integrity of the structure.

The proposed design and layout take into account the defining character of the listed building and its setting. Another principle the applicant is following is the commitment to carry out the minimum amount of work to the interior. The only interference to any of the features of the facade for which the building is principally listed, are to the restoration of the front vault which, when complete, will combine with the rest of the elevation to bring a major enhancement.

Exterior

The applicant proposes to carry out the necessary amount of work to the interior and only relevant conservation work, to the front exterior. There will be no interference to any of the features of the facade for which the building is principally listed. The work proposed to the front vault will see the exposure an unattractive in-fill that relates well to the historic integrity of the main building, both in terms of scale and materials. The plan to open the void will see the front returned to its historic type where it, like the adjacent buildings, had access from street level.

The front elevation will be transformed by the removal of the large slab of concrete forming the link to the Georgian windows, allowing the window openings in the listed building to be reopened to their original context with open space in the foreground. It is proposed that the creation of railings to the new lightwell with a gate to the new stair to basement will reintroduce an element of the building which once marked its external character alongside the other buildings in this row on Leigh Street. This gives a significant enhancement to the exterior and will be of great advantage to the street scene and Conservation area.

Visually, the open view along Leigh Street towards Cartwright gardens will be improved allowing for a seamless connection between the main façade of 6 Leigh Street and the listed buildings either side.

Interior

It is intended that the degree of remodeling required to the existing spaces within the building to create new living accommodation are not intensive. A key principle of the proposal is that there will be no change in structure and the alterations are brought about by changes to the internal partition walls. It is commendable that a design solution can be found that causes little impact on the historic significance of the building whilst being able to produce facilities associated with modern urban living.

Regards the impact on the significance of the front room, the concern about the lack of an internal lobby and fire strategy at this level is offset by the proposals for access and insulation of the ground floor entrance area and the upgrading of the fabric of the building.

The proposals for the area at ground and basement level will see the space put to more effective use in its return to residential spaces. The ground floor covers a similar footprint as the basement, with the only difference is that the basement also consists of the front vaults and is in general of a more sub-divided nature at present. The ground floor has the benefits of comprising larger open rooms.

It is intended that certain areas of the existing space are remodeled to return the building to its early layout. Therefore the corridor is to be reinstated as a key link to the side and the stairwell at the rear will be reconstructed, allowing natural sources of light to flood in. Materials, such as white render surface and light timber will utilize the natural light available in the courtyards and also helps the building additions read as an infill between the retained areas of brickwork.

The architect has designed attractive and complimentary living accommodation. Later shop paraphernalia can be removed without harming architectural or historic importance of this building and the spaces are to be realigned in such a way so as not to damage the integrity of the structure. Earlier remnants of the shop such as the sink and fireplace, are still a source of its historic integrity and are to be integrated into the new design to ensure distinctive features of the old are blended into the new.

3.6 Design Options

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Two schemes were considered in the design formulation stage. The first saw the conversion of the rear outbuilding to a three-storey dwelling, occupied by 5 persons, whilst the [referred option puts less pressure on the space to occupy more people. As it will see the rear outbuilding converted to a two-storey dwelling (Ground and Basement) with the first floor as a studio flat above.

The scheme proposed is of a scale that relates to the existing spaces of no. 6 Leigh Street, as well as to the more discrete flats and accommodation that are found within the fine range of listed buildings on Leigh Street.

Ground floor

Preferred Option:

The new flat at ground level is accessed from a lobby, with a new door on the external face of the rear wall. The new configuration sees the shop retain its space whilst still having generous back room area, as seen to the side of the new flat (Space B). It is significant that changes proposed to the side of the shop unit towards the front, see realignment in access and movement, in keeping with historical precedence. This is seen in the opening up of old blocked doorways on the external face of the old house and the creation of a new door to the lobby of the flat creating a connection to the ground floor entrance hall.

In the new corridor space parallel to the shop, the sloping ceiling and the existing door will be retained as features of architectural interest. The latter will be kept permanently fixed, which allows the building some flexibility in future years when another scheme may want to open this space up again. Changes to the main shop space are minimal and in effect only concern the servicing and cabling.

The principle dwelling space is in the rear outbuilding where a kitchen/ diner sides onto a terrace. The floor plan is largely unchanged with the only change to be seen in the loss of a partition wall and the clearance of the blocked-off stairs in the corner. The adjacent space (C) is the key circulation area where two separate stairs lead up to the first floor and down to the basement respectively. In addition, a blocked opening is returned to its former state as a functioning doorway, allowing movement from the new front door to the loving area. The final change which improves the general continuity of this space is the raising of floor levels to match that of the main house.

The divisions of the space still accord to historic precedent based on the 1 room wide by 2 deep principle. Access to the stairwell in the side of the floor plan is key in allowing circulation through the building – the side partition reintroduces the spatial dynamic that was the basis of the Victorian shop area.

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Basement:

Preferred Option:

Both are accessed from a new lobby/ circulation space in the space between the rear outbuilding and the main house.

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The floor plan is largely the same as the ground floor, with emphasis put on access and circulation, changing levels and the retention and reuse of architectural features of interest. So, the in-filled doorway on the principle wall of the basement flat will be opened up, with a small amount of retaining wall also being removed so as to open up the kitchen into the living area.

It is necessary to make changes to the heights of certain areas, as the storage areas to the rear were not designed or meant for human habitation. So in the rear outbuilding for example where the headroom is under 2 metres, the applicant intends to lower the basement floor to improve headroom

The change in level brought on by the transition from rear wall to main house to the later extensions will be mitigated by the introduction of a step. In addition, partition walls will be lost towards the rear where a new opening is to be created in the existing external flank wall of the rear dwelling to create a connection to the courtyard area. Another new opening is to be formed at the bottom of the central stairs, so as to allow greater flow and circulation.

The proposal sees the selective removal of later interventions such as existing timber posts, steel joists and beams and the red brick fireplace. In the case of the steel joists in the front room this will help open up the light well. Other particular features such as the sink at the front of the basement will be retained, and ensure some historic integrity is maintained.

In conjunction with the plans for the front vault, new windows are to be introduced. Work to the front vault area will see a section of lightwell to be partitioned to form an entrance, whilst the existing gully is to be relocated to accommodate the stair.

Option assessment

Regards the First floor layouts, a partition has been introduced into the rear bedroom so as to form an entrance lobby in the rear room with a direct access into the centrally placed shower room. Although it does reduce the rear room and makes the room feel tight, it is important to note that the remodeling of the space does not interfere with historic fabric.

A principle factor in the selection of the scheme was in the approach to the configuration of space in the main circulation area of the flat. The position of the stair is a key factor and the preferred option gave access to first floor and basement based on designated structures in different spaces. Whilst an option for incorporating both ground and basement stairs into a combined stair unit on the side wall would have had the unfortunate effect of reducing the historic importance of the stair as a signifier of movement and circulation. The removal of the redundant stair in the proposed scheme gives testimony to the invention of new contemporary stairs in a more suitable location within this space

The preferred Option allows for a better solution to using the internal spaces to provide a meaningful interpretation of the spaces that give the lower floors of this property its character. It liberates both floors as well as the first floor, allowing access from a new

lobby and circulation space in the space between the rear outbuilding and the main house. We would contend that ultimately this Option helps to realise a satisfactory way of connecting with the floors below which, in the wider picture, is the overriding design principle of this scheme and one that should be endorsed.

4.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

The character of historic buildings and their contribution to the townscape can be severely diminished through insensitive alteration, extension or neighbouring development, or through neglect and dilapidation. The Applicant has put forward a practical solution to effectively utilise the whole Site, thereby allowing it to be viable in the long-term.

Works are proposed to bring the ground and basement floors of the property back into good condition, up to modern standard, whilst returning the spaces to Georgian layout and retaining the character of historic features. Overall the impact of the proposed development on the existing structure is minimal and there will be no impact on the street scene.

In the early days the subject property was used as shop premises by influential local traders, before being owned in the nineteenth century by a drapery company. In the twentieth century it was given a fit out to suit the previous occupants (Povey and Company, from 1971) and their increasing retail interest in hardware, before becoming vacant in recent years. Market conditions have seen the loss of independent hardware stores to the supermarket giants and so the proposals to change the use to residential gains much precedence from prevailing uses on the upper floors,

4.1 Impact on Architectural and historic character

Through an in depth understanding of the site and its context it is possible to evaluate the heritage impacts accruing from the proposals.

Generally, the original use for which the building was designed and built is no longer viable for modern shop uses. The proposal recognises the potential for allowing the historic continuum to be progressed in a way that has little or no impact on the character or appearance of the building.

The change of use is seen to be the only viable way to keep the building in active use. The proposal creates a far better use of the building that is compatible with the current fabric, exterior, interior and the setting of the historic building. The works to alter the building and improve its use and accessibility do not harm its special interest.

An interesting architectural element of the building's interior is the staircase and door surrounds on the upper levels with their Victorian ornamentation and detail, such as the lions moulded onto architraves and the turning wood on the baluster. Whilst simple, it is also part of the original decorative scheme and contributes to an understanding of the building, and thus is of moderate significance. No such features of decorative intent are present on the ground and basement levels, leaving these spaces to be below average.

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Due to the previous loss of major elements such as the staircase, or the room plan on the ground and basement floors, it is considered the architectural and historic significance has already to some degree been lessened.

Later changes made by shopkeepers account for the functional style of a number of features found in the rooms, such as storage, fireplaces and sinks. Designs proposed in this application will follow the historic evolution of the building and proposals to recreate the corridor link, the front vaults and the vertical staircase at the rear follow historic plans. Whilst the proposal to utilize existing door openings and restore ceiling heights are also given precedence through previous works. In addition, the opportunity to restore the ground floor at no. 6. to its previous proportions will complement the historic use of the space for commercial premises. The reversion to former proportions also applies to the two rear rooms.

The proposed scheme will fit entirely within the original envelope of the building, without any extensions. The remodeling is adopting the internal floor space of the original upper floors so that with some minor interventions and upgrading of internal features such as walls, habitable areas can be formed to suit the needs of self-contained flats.

Although major remodelling is proposed there are no real changes to the layout of the building, as the scheme is contained within the envelope of the existing. The ground and basement floors will have a number of additional walls created in order to divide up the space into rooms more suited to its contemporary use.

The proposals gain credibility as it seeks to remove some elements of later work (such as steel hoists) which are negative features of the building. Indeed, by remodeling those parts of the interior (such as the corridor) which are distractive to the unity of the whole, the scheme can more closely return the building to its early antecedents.

Impact on Historic fabric

On ground floor, there is no loss of the historic fabric identified as comprising lathe and plaster on the partition walls between Grid lines A and C. Between C and D, the highly modified and plastered partition wall will be removed and a new wall inserted to separate shop and rear dwelling and facilitate the introduction of the internal stair. The chimney breast at the site is identified as being a later addition and is being removed. Its loss is offset by the retention of the two chimney units in the front rooms. Between D and E structural elements are being retained to define the separation of the rear dwelling flat and the courtyard space to its side.

On the Basement floor, extensive renewal will be carried out on the plaster walls currently lining the front rooms (A-C). The central partitions of C-D are being reoriented to help facilitate separation between basement flat and rear dwelling flat. In line with the Ground floor, the breeze block fireplace is being removed. At the rear, the dividing wall between storage units 1 and 2 is being opened up to create greater space. As the rear storage units are identified as being later additions, this has minimal impact on their integrity and the fact that they are not consistent with the external facing wall of Gridline D. Indeed, the opening up of the external flank of the storage units does not affect the integral character of the building and it is noted that three standalone structural elements are still being retained facing the courtyard.

Impact on Street scene:

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The frontage is the chief reason for the listing of the building and the design carefully ensures that works to the building will not touch or impinge on this central feature as seen from Leigh Street. The reinstatement of the vault area will bring an enhancement to the street scene and is scene to unite the Conservation Area. Access will be maintained through the existing entrances and the front staircase features are left in situ, with only the balusters and treads to be improved.

In addition, the scale of existing properties on Leigh Street is predominantly three/ four storeys. Therefore the proposal not to extend and keep within the existing vertical scale is typical of the street scene and causes no impact.

The proposal is not expected to have any material effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or host building. External alterations at ground floor level to open up the basement front vaults would not cause any loss of residential amenity in terms of light, privacy, or visually intrusion.

In addition, the proposals to maintain the existing façade of the building, with the window opening and both side doors in use will improve the historic and architectural integrity of the street scene. At the same time the scheme provides a chance for taking away some of the less satisfactory elements of the shop front such as the concrete base fronting the window and then reinstalling a frontage more in keeping with this part of Bloomsbury.

The proposed has a much more effective composition and plan form, as it attempts to rectify later extensions done to the central area where a number of smaller units were created off the main axle of the building. By restoring a plan form the scheme goes to ensure a more improved continuity of space between different units and structural and secondary partitions.

The building is not rare and is one of many within a rich and designated historic and architectural environment. It retains integrity by virtue of the fact that what remains is an example of multi-phase survival and in the surrounding landscape it offers a sense of completeness and coherence.

Heritage Impact Summary

The design process for the proposal is to carry out the minimum amount of work necessary, if any, to the external envelope of the property. This ensures that the premises retains its character and the property is not altered outside of what is considered acceptable and suitable to the street scene of Leigh Street and central Bloomsbury

Given that the significance of no. 6 is brought about by the outline of the original plan form, as well as small examples of detailing of some wall panels and stairs, the new design is not considered materially to damage the historic or architectural interest. Indeed, by selectively stripping out later unnecessary elements, the scheme carefully reintroduces a stronger historic narrative to this building.

4.2 Policy Assessments

The alterations to the Listed Building need to be considered against Local Plan Policy's and conservation guidance which is set out in the NPPF. There is also the statutory requirement that the local planning authority

“shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”¹¹.

The NPPF advises of the desirability of any development for,
"sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses "consistent with conservation"¹²."

It goes on to say that:

"great weight should be given to the asset's conservation... as heritage assets are irreplaceable"¹³."

The key policies in the Core Strategy are based on promoting high quality, sustainable design and physical works to improve the Boroughs places and streets, whilst preserving and enhancing the unique character of Camden and the distinctiveness of the conservation areas and other historic and valued buildings, spaces and places.

Policy DP25 in Camden Development Policies provides more detailed guidance on the Council's approach to protecting and enriching the range of features that make up its built heritage.

4.3 Local Plan assessments

Core Strategy policy CS14 and Camden Development Policies (DP24 and DP25) give Camden's approach to promoting high quality places and preserving and enhancing its heritage.

Core Strategy

CS14

The policy seeks development to be of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character and preserves and enhances Camden's diverse heritage assets and their settings,

The proposed changes to the frontage will improve the quality of the building, enhancing the urban landscape and the street environment and, through this, improve the experience of the borough for residents and visitors. The design is considered appropriate to its context and takes an opportunity to improve the character and quality of the area. As the design is being contained within the envelope of the historic building plan, it will be safe and accessible and has little impact on the pedestrian environment and public realm.

Ultimately the design responds to the local area and the defining characteristics of the front vault and its railings. The response reinforces this unique element of Leigh Street and in so doing widens local distinctiveness. An enhanced public realm should contribute to improved walking and cycling environments, respect and reinforce local identity and character, attract people to the area and encourage the use of streets and public spaces to create diverse, vibrant and lively places

The development is compatible with strategic and local views in terms of setting, scale

¹¹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, 66.1,

¹² NPPF 126

¹³ NPPF 132

and massing. Due to its location at sub ground level impact on the skyline are almost non-existent and it does not have the height to mar other important buildings in the area.

Development Policies

DP24 – design

Policy commands reference to the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings, where alterations and extensions are proposed. Regard should also be taken of the quality of materials used and the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level.

The scheme has been conceived so that it responds creatively to its site and its context. The layout takes into account the pattern and size of blocks, open spaces, gardens and streets in the surrounding area. Rather than creating additional structure or form to the listed building, the proposal to reinstate a historic void in the ground provides an innovative design that will greatly enhance the built environment.

The scheme recognises the prevailing pattern, density and scale of surrounding development and the existence of rhythms, symmetries and uniformities in the townscape that it can aspire to. The choice of materials for the terrace railing is compatible by virtue of their simple quality, texture, tone and colour and when assembled next to the other buildings on Leigh Street will create a unified composition. Its detailing has been carefully considered so that it conveys quality of design and promotes further an attractive and interesting building.

The scheme also propounds the re-use of the existing building and so preserves the 'embodied' energy expended in their original construction. Construction waste is to be minimised and the use of durable, naturally sourced materials, treated with 'soft' construction methods and the use of natural light makes the scheme sustainable.

The retention and adaptation of existing buildings will be encouraged. The creation of further private outdoor amenity space that adds significantly to a resident's quality of life is also to be encouraged.

DP25 – heritage and conservation

The Council will therefore only grant planning permission for development in Camden's conservation areas that preserves and enhances the special character or appearance of the area. Having regard to the content of the conservation area audit, the best quality materials will be used to match existing traditional materials which preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Area.

Traditional features such as the front vault and railings will be reinstated where they have been lost, using the example from the neighbouring houses to inform the restoration. The detailed design of the front area has created further visual interest in the building, thus bringing some enjoyment to the view for residents and serving to exemplify quality.

The setting of adjacent listed buildings will not be harmed by unsympathetic neighbouring development. However the degree of intervention required and the location on ground level in the immediate context of the building means the impact on its immediate setting will be minimal.

Views around the site have been analysed in order to evaluate the significance of the development upon the setting of heritage assets. This concludes that the addition successfully integrates with the surrounding townscape detailing as well as the wider scale and massing and thus is compatible to conservation area characteristics.

The creation of internal accommodation has no impact on the 'named' features of the listed building and has been discussed before there is a precedent for discrete changes to be made to the layout.

4.4 NPPF assessments

National policy on the historic environment is contained within The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published 27 March 2012. Chapter 12 of the NPPF covers 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' (pp. 30 – 32).

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The policies in paragraphs 18 to 219 of NPPF, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

The Bloomsbury Conservation area Audit identifies the cultural heritage values of the place, in which Leigh Street is located. It describes the area's history, fabric and character with an understanding of its origins, how and why it has changed over time and the form and condition of its constituent elements and materials. Extensive mapping and assessment (at Camden Archives) demonstrates how the past has shaped the present landscape. Leigh Street is identified as one of the distinct architectural elements to the north of the Bloomsbury area, largely due to the changes which took place in the 19th century in relation to the development railway infrastructure to the north on Euston Road, as well as the more cultural changes taking place to the south.

In respects to NPPF the following criteria for assessment are important in establishing the credibility of the proposal:

- Impact on significance (128)
- Suitable design (9, 17, 59, 186 and 187)
- Conservation of heritage assets (132, 134)
- The setting (128, 129, 132 and 137)

IN RELATION TO PARAGRAPH 128: the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance

In the setting of No. 6 there are two types of heritage asset; the listed buildings and the setting of the Conservation Area. The section on Conservation area context (2.2) and Historic Review (2.4) give information to help understand the significance of the heritage asset

No. 6 Leigh Street is a grade II listed building whose significance rests in its architectural value, as a fine example of a Georgian house. It is also of historical value as it illustrates the way in which the building type in general developed during Victorian times into the modern era, providing a further subdivision of spacious accommodation

in the upper floors whilst retaining the traditional form of a shop below.

IN RELATION TO PARAGRAPHS 9, 17, 59, 186 & 187: the consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use.

The building plan reflects the general footprint found to the south of Leigh Street with the narrow long plot being exploited in the new layout. The small increase in the footprint to the front of the basement in the vault will have no impact on the character of the street and if anything causes an enhancement. The development of the space to the rear with a courtyard at ground and courtyard/ terrace at basement creates a footprint that is in ratio to the plot size, leaving a space that is approximately proportional to the ratio of solid/ void found in the historical floor plan.

A proposal of this quality will make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The proposals to create a new square-shaped ground plan form broadly follows the same footprint of the existing building, and the smaller sub units that define the make-up of the flat are aligned in the same direction as existing. They have been configured in such a way that can be occupied in this fundamentally narrow space.

Floor levels are proposed to be unified and materials are used that will enhance the experience of light and maximize amenity for the residents.

IN RELATION TO PARAGRAPHS 132 & 134: Weight given to the significance of a designated heritage asset and its conservation

Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As the building and the Conservation area are designated heritage assets the impact of the proposals on both the building and the setting of the conservation area need to be carefully evaluated.

As has been stated, the building's historical significance (as part of the later 20th century suburbanisation) is conclusive. For on the upper stories well converted residential apartments conterminous with its historic antecedent have been formed within the confines of the original building. Whereas on the Ground and basement floors the significance of the historic shop has already been significantly reduced through layers of additions and adaptation, leaving the current spaces looking rather isolated and lacking context.

So, the benefits derived from rectifying this imbalance through constructing a new flat on a broadly similar footprint are positive. The proposed redevelopment at the front of the basement to the vault area will bring significant improvements to the public realm and the benefits to the residents, drivers and walkers who regularly use the area. The setting of the northern end of the conservation area will be improved through the new addition, improving the structure and visual quality to what is currently a neutral and isolated front area within a unified street scene. This will enhance the setting for the buildings in the conservation area and help improve the built form on both sides of the road.

The conservation benefit of the proposal effectively sees imagination in the design process and how the new relates to historic features in the interior and to the

surrounding context on the exterior. This aims to minimise conflict and bring greater clarity to a building on a street that forms an important but ancillary road in the historic core of Bloomsbury.

IN RELATION TO PARAGRAPHS 128, 129, 132 & 137: on consideration of setting

Setting is defined as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

The character of Leigh Street has a reasonable sense of enclosure as a result of tight grain of buildings on either side. In addition, the character of the front railing and the basement provide a strong part of the setting to the south side of the street and indeed enable this part of the Conservation area, in association work with Cartwright gardens.

The proposed depth of the void to the front of No. 6 is in line with the historic scale and size of the vault. It will also be in scale with all the other buildings in the terrace with the railing stair down to the flat on the left hand side. This will act to enhance the areas character and be appropriate to the setting, whilst also helping strengthen this side of Leigh Street.

4.5 Policy Summary

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires any harm to the designated heritage asset to be clearly and convincingly justified. Local Plan policies referred to above state that proposals to extend or alter a listed building will only be permitted where it would not result in the damage or loss of features of special architectural or historic interest and where the character and appearance or setting of the building would be preserved or enhanced.

In consideration of the policy assessments, the installation and design of the new flat contributes positively to the character, distinctiveness and significance of the listed building and the wider historic environment.

The proposed offers a solution to using the internal footprint to provide a meaningful interpretation of the spaces that give the lower floors of this property its character. It liberates both floors as well as the first floor, allowing access from a new lobby and circulation space in the space between the rear outbuilding and the main house.

In respects to the weight given to the heritage significance, the Work proposed to the interior has fundamentally recognised the integrity and value of any remaining historic fabric. So the preservation of such features is a key part of the set of proposals created for bringing the lower floors of the building back to life.

Qualities which once gave the building historic and architectural credence, such as the stairway, the side corridor and the front lightwell/ gully are to be reintroduced in modern materials. This will allow the historic integrity of the building to be incorporated into the proposals for the new flat as part of the conservation process (Nppf 132, 135)

4.6 Heritage Benefits of the proposed design

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The development actively seeks to preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset, such as the frontages to the property, the space of the pavement and street view towards Cartwright Gardens. It does this through helping to enhance the significance of the setting (the heritage asset) through the reinstatement of the front vault and as such creates an opportunity that is of public benefit.

Elements of the interior such as the staircase and side corridor will be reintroduced, thus reinstating a significant part of the buildings Georgian character.

A number of potential heritage benefits that weigh in favour of this scheme, including:

- It enhances the significance of a heritage asset and contribution of its setting.
- It makes a positive contribution to sustainable craftsmanship.
- The remodeling of the interior better reveals the significance of the heritage asset and therefore enhances enjoyment of it and the sense of identity and place.
- The scale and detailing is carefully arranged, so as to respect the layout, plan and arrangements of the historic building.
- Its historic cellular layout is well adapted to residential use
- The changes to the front are an appropriate design that relates to its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.
- It does not detract from other evidential, historic, aesthetic or communal heritage values

In respects to the Core Strategy the scheme relates well to the distinctive local character of the area and its adjacent buildings and is designed to create a safe, inclusive and attractive environment that will enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage. The analysis has shown that the new development is appropriate and compatible in terms of size, scale, massing and design. It is important to note that it protects the open spaces and views which are so critical to the character and setting of area.

In respects of National Policy, the degree of the harm caused to the historic environment is minimal and is not compromised when balanced against the wider design, public realm and community benefits. It helps to build on the views of the buildings that define the setting of this stretch of Leigh Street at the corner with Marchmont Avenue. Indeed, as a small but important part of the panorama of Leigh Street, the changes proposed will help to complement and enhance this part of Camden in a 21st century setting.

With respects to Local Plan (DP24) It will have a positive impact on the public realm, and on views and vistas, allowing greater integration into the wider historic environment and spaces and features of local historic value.

This statement concludes that the proposed remodelling would be an appropriate solution to this Listed building, particularly as a result of its design, which is based on a respect for traditional architecture, and its use of materials, which sit well within the locality.

The proposed remodelling seeks to meet the key objectives of Bloomsbury Conservation

area Appraisal, in ensuring the design approach causes no harm to the character of the listed building and does not impinge on the setting of the surrounding buildings.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires any harm to the designated heritage asset to be clearly and convincingly justified. Local Plan policies referred to above state that proposals to extend or alter a listed building will only be permitted where it would not result in the damage or loss of features of special architectural or historic interest and where the character and appearance or setting of the building would be preserved or enhanced.

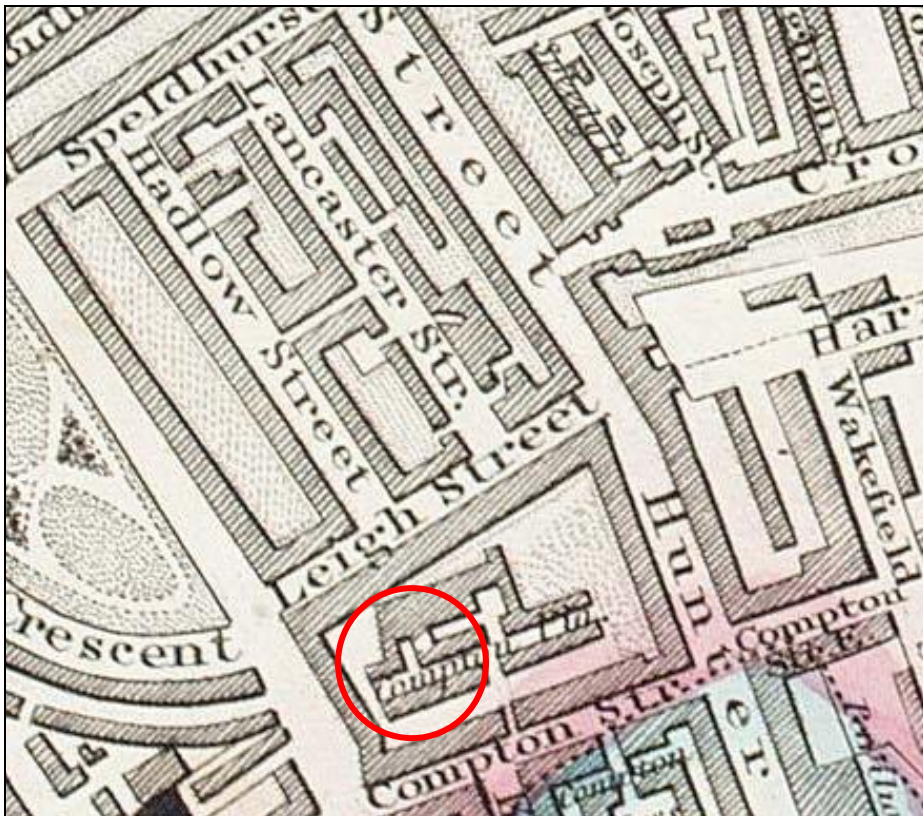
The harm to the listed building as a result of the exposed vault at the front would be minimal because the new railings, new lightwell and stairs are designed to be the same size and scale as the other buildings on Leigh Street. a thoughtfully articulated frontage which presents itself discretely to the road will act to draw attention to the quality of the listed building behind and those to the sides.

Mindful of the 20th century interventions to the rear half of the building, a well-crafted series of rooms forming a two bed flat over two floors is a positive way of restoring a currently tired and dislocated space. By being designed in sensitive materials that relate to the old building this will actually improve the setting of the listed building.

The case made above considers that the opening up of the vault and the use of materials used on neighboring buildings will have no adverse effect on the appearance or the character of the building. Given the position and orientation of adjacent properties it is not considered that the amenities of other dwellings would be harmed by the proposal in terms of overshadowing, dominance or overlooking.

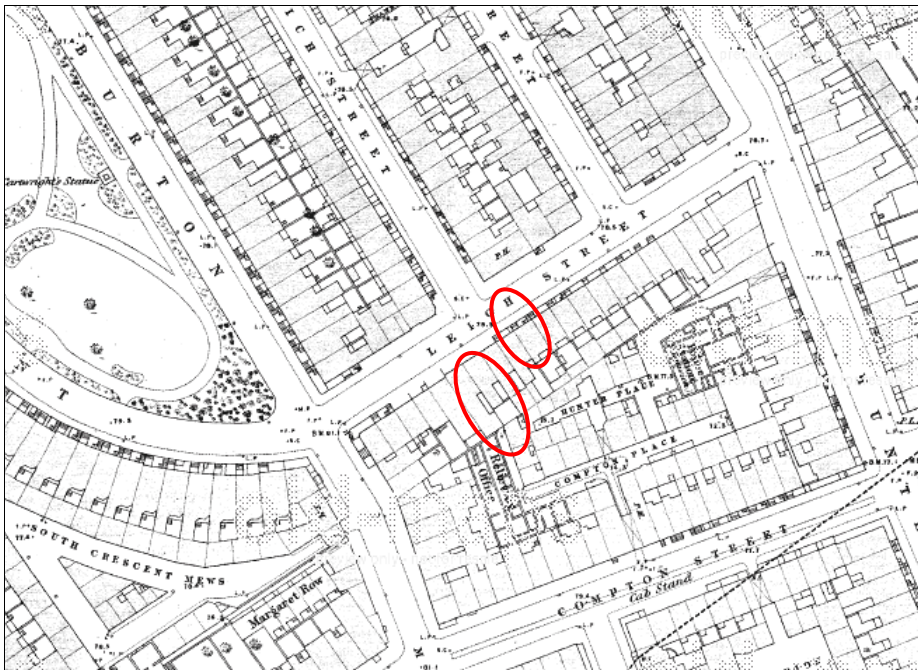
The proposal enhances the current visual amenity and aesthetics of the setting. It is not considered that the proposed works would appear out of place within the street scene or would harm the visual amenity of the area. The approach to the works is to retain as much of the historic fabric of the building as possible and as such, the character of the listed building would not be harmed.

HISTORIC MAPS



Greenwood 1830

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1874
1895





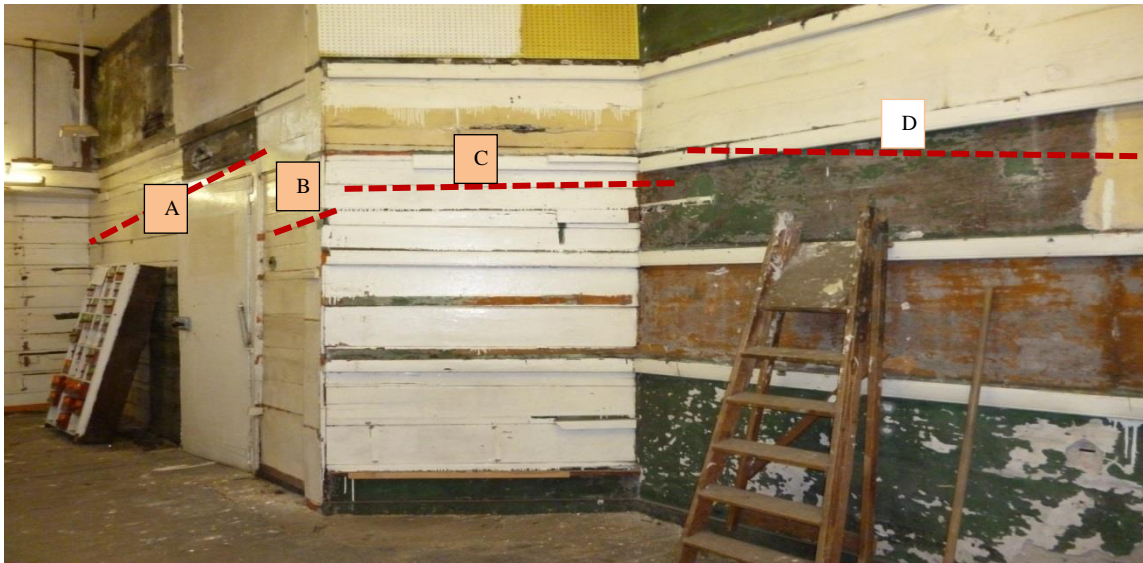
1911 APPENDIX 1

In the analysis of the building fabric in the front room, four sections of the wall have been individually assessed.

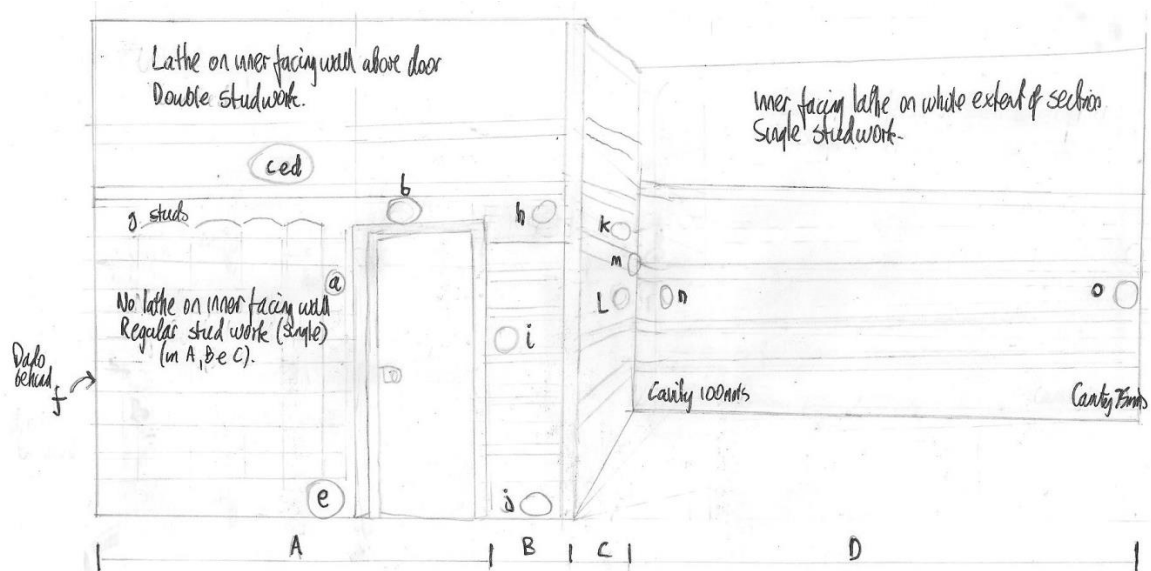
In places, tongue and groove woodwork is fixed and difficult to make new insertions. The panels that have probably been put over in Victorian are Douglas Fir, a quality indicated through the use of a green composite in the wood.

Where possible, existing rough openings were enhanced and made visible within. In other places new holes were made (e, h, j and l) either through lifting loose panels or boring small (20mm's) hole behind a dismantled shelf part. Where, timber panel overlay was removed and shelf taken down it was fixed back afterwards. At no point was the external plaster layer disturbed.

SECTIONS



Section Profile: Front room (A – B) measured on 9 May 2013



Section A

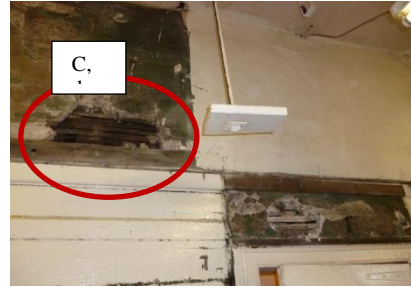
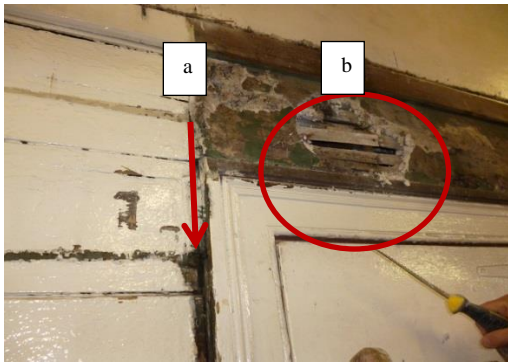
This area concerns the immediate space above the door and its surrounds. Section B has a stud (a) running up the side of the door attaching to the frame. The lathe work is first exposed above the door frame (b) and a single stud is also seen in support. Significant Double studwork at upper level (c), with depth of stud observed to be @75mm's and glimpse of cavity through to outer wall lathe (d).

The tight fixing of the tongue and groove work on the large vertical section (e) was opened at ground level, where it revealed there to be no lathe on the inner facing side. On the outer facing side of the cavity there is timber rather than lathe work, up to the line level with the door. This relates to the dado on the other side of the wall (f).

The wall has good gaps between the stud timbers and the distance between each member is in the range of 210 – 360 mm's (g). The studs are approximately 50mm's wide and as there is no lathe on the inner facing section of the wall, the arrangement of studs has presumably been successful in supporting the shelves.

Profile

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Detail



a



b



c



d

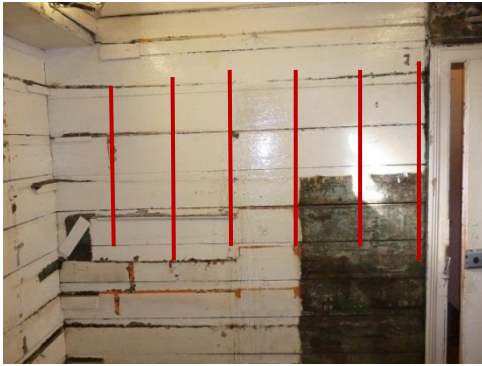


e



f

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g



Section B

Adjacent to door (h) removed hardwood sheet to reveal lathe and single stud beneath: At bottom (j), timber pulled way, to reveal joist on floor and cavity under floor. There is no lathe on the inner facing wall between top (h) and bottom (i). Existing opening at i also examined to reveal no lathe at the low - mid level.

Profile



Before & after opening up

Detail



h



i



j

Section C

In the upper section (k) the material was compact and considered too friable to make any further investigation. Although it is presumed that the pattern of lathe commenced above and around the door (photos b & h) is continued. Indeed the arrangement as seen in Section A and B, where there is no lathe on the mid-lower levels in continued and the hole (l) made shows there is no

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lathe on the inner facing wall and the cavity is seen directly through to the timber of the outer wall. At the point of the junction of the wall (m) the lathe is found to be moulded to the timber stud.

Wall profile



m



L



m

Detail



L



m

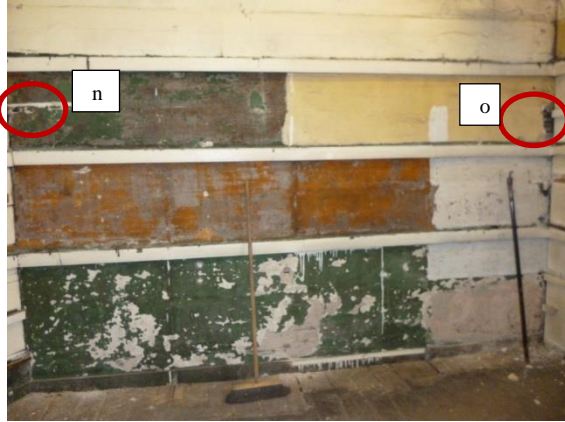
Section D

On this final section which is the longest wall, a number of the previous patterns are repeated. Due to the length of the wall it is the least straight section and it is seen that the depth of the cavity starts at 100mm's nearest to Section C, whilst it is reduced to 75mm's by the time the wall concludes towards the front of the building.

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In variation to the previous sections, the lathe on the inner facing wall is arranged on the lower to mid-level point below the line of the door. It is noted that the extent of the dado on the other wide of the wall determines where the outer layer of the cavity is timber.

Wall profile



Detail



n



o

Conclusion

The structure in the front room on the ground floor represents a largely unified example of early fabric generally in a complete condition. The sections illustrate differing uses of lathe, with some parts arranged on both sides of the cavity (mainly at higher levels) and other parts only apparent on the outer wall facing the corridor. Section A, and C only have lathe on both inner and outer

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walls from door level height to ceiling. Whereas Section D has lathe on both sides from floor to ceiling. Where there is timber dado on the outer wall at low to mid-level the only lathe is on the internal facing wall. The horsehair is very apparent in all instances and although the edges of individual parts have become frayed and worn, the general direction and spacing remains unaltered.

The stud work has been well applied and distances between timbers are well considered. The variation between single stud at lower-mid levels and double stud as revealed at upper level is significant and suggests the builders realised the potential benefits of distributing weight through this manner at a high level.

The analysis demonstrates on a wider basis in the front room that wooden lathe and studs are existent throughout. The proposals have been carefully articulated so as not to intrude on these elements and so I am confident that the changes do not affect the essential heritage aspect of the listed building.